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AUTHOR Hopf, Diether; Hatzichristou, Chryse
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ABSTRACT

This paper presents salient points of a comprehensive project on the educational problems of southern European migrant workers' children in schools in Germany. These selected findings concern the origins of the migrants, the selectiveness of the migration process, and the school situation of the children of the migrants and of those migrants who return home. Section 1, an introduction, describes the historical backdrop from the labor migration and the broad basis for the primary study. Section 2 outlines study methods and describes the samples. Section 3 presents the results in the following categories: (1) origins and characteristics of migrant workers and school situation of their children in the host country; (2) mother-tongue teaching, nationality based classes, and schools in the host country; (3) educational situation after return to country of origin; and (4) special educational treatments for return migrants' children in the country of origin. Section 4 presents conclusions noting that migrant children have serious problems at school during the migratory period, that they are at a disadvantage after returning home to the country of origin, and that unless they return to their country when they are 9 years old at the latest, they have little chance of succeeding at school. Included are 11 figures and 20 references. (JB)

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Diether Hopf & Chryse Hatzichristou
Max Planck Institute
for Human Development and Education
Berlin, FRG

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Migrant Workers' Children: School Problems in the Host Country and in the Country of Origin after the Return Home[1]

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[1] The study consists of 4 parts which are concerned with the four educational "situations" in which a migrant or re-migrant child may find himself or herself during the periods of migration and remigration in the target country of migration and/or in the home country. The third part of the project in which the situation of return migrants in the compulsory schools of the country of origin has been studied was conducted together with Dr. Chryse Hatzichristou at the Max Planck Institute, Berlin.

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1 Introduction

Since about 1960 Germany[1] has been the main target country of an extensive labour migration from mediterranean countries to Northern Europe. Since then, more than 15 million people have crossed the German border. During the same time span, there has also been a substantial return migration of about 11 million migrants and their family members (i.e. more than 70%) to the countries of origin.

Some 4 million migrant workers - and families - are currently resident in what was West Germany before re-unification, in other words, some 7% of the total population. Nearly one million of them are school-age children, now attending German State schools, in the general and vocational education. They represent approximately 12% of the school population.

The present paper deals with the educational problems of the children of migrant workers coming from six South European countries (the so-called feeder or recruitment countries): Turkey, Yugoslavia, Italy, Greece, Spain, and Portugal. Since it was not possible to study each country in detail, particular emphasis was placed on Greece. The applicability of several relevant conclusions is tested for other nationalities.

Since return migration is fairly typical for labour migrants - only the Turkish exhibit relatively low figures - it was decided to consider the full migration circle in the project, migration and return migration - as opposed to the migratory period alone as it is done in nearly all migration studies. The following graph presents an overview of the four parts of the project:

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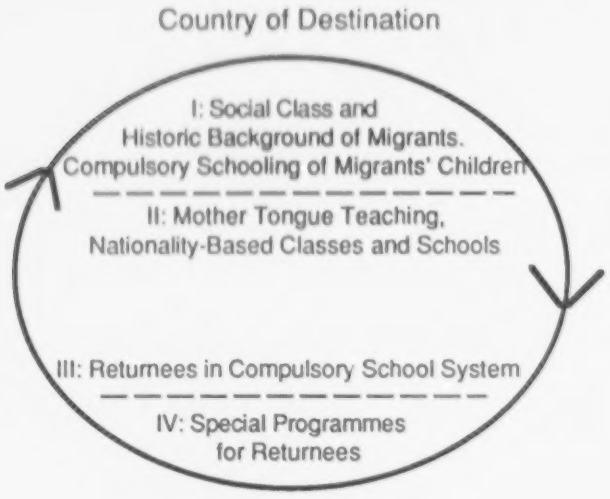
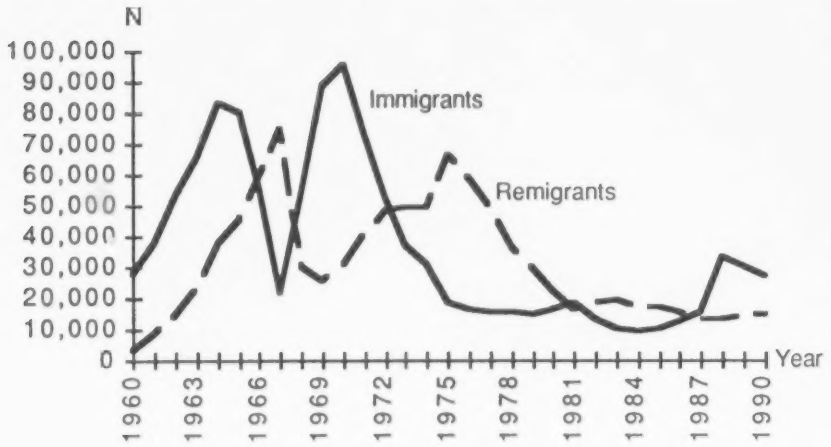
1 The study is refering to the old FRG (West Germany), consisting of the 11 (old) Länder (states) before the unification with the 5 new Länder of the former GDR (East Germany) in October 1990. In the former GRD, migrants are only a very small minority and their situation is entirely different.

School Problems of Second and Third Generation
Labour Migrants and Remigrants: Project Overview



Over the past 30 years, Greek migration to and from West Germany has been significant. Greece is a small country of some 10 million inhabitants. More than one million of them have migrated to Germany since 1960. About 80% of those subsequently returned to Greece having spent an average of between 15 and 20 years in West Germany.

Immigration and remigration of Greeks to and from the FRG, 1960-1989



Greek parents attach a great deal of importance to the successful education of their offspring during the time away from the home country, and consider the education of their children as the main reason for remigration.

The study, which aims to identify the major causes of success or failure at school, is an analysis of the child´s situation whilst at school in the host country during the migration period, as well as at school back in the home country. In order to understand the functioning of the migrant children in the schools and to predict their possible future achievements, the origin of the parent generation was studied in terms of their family background and the educational orientation of their ancestors.

This paper summarizes salient points of this comprehensive project by presenting selected findings a) concerning the origins of the migrants themselves and the selectiveness of the migration process and b) on the school situation of the children of the migrants and remigrants. This is done by regrouping the results of the various sections of the study dedicated to the four educational "situations" in which a migrant child may find himself or herself:

- 1) in compulsory schooling in Germany,
- 2) in special programmes for foreign students in Germany (eg: mother tongue teaching, nationality-based classes or schools),
- 3) in compulsory schooling for the children once they have returned to their home country, and
- 4) in specialialised educational programmes for children after returning home.

In the course of their schooling, most foreign pupils encounter at least two of these situations, and many of them experience all four.

2 Methods and samples

Several different methods were used for the *first part* of the project. The objective was to gather data a) on the origins and characteristics of migrant workers in Greece and b) the educational experiences undergone by their offspring in the compulsory school system of the host country. Official statistics were re-examined and data were collected from other studies in the countries in question. These included the following:

- historic accounts of the characteristics of the ancestor families of the migrants
- census and micro-census data in the country of origin since about 1920
- types of migratory flow
- data on the different social classes the migrants come from
- information on school achievement in the host country
- interviews with specialists in the field as well as migrants.

All this information took account of specific regional attributes.

A similar approach was used for the *second part* of the study being concerned with the special programmes for foreign students in Germany like mother tongue teaching and nationality-based classes or schools. In addition, attendance figures for lessons given in the mother tongue teaching were collected. Since the school situation is fairly different in the various "Länder" (states) of the FRG, specific regional attributes were taken into account.

For the *third part* of the study concerning the situation faced by the pupils in compulsory schooling in their home country after return migration, as a complement to the methodologies listed above, a survey was carried out in the home country (Greece). The sample covered two age groups in the public school system: fifth and sixth grade elementary school (N=976, average age=11.4 years) and second and third grade secondary school children (N=784, average age=14.3 years). Those returning from West Germany to Greece were divided into two groups according to the year they returned to Greece: those having been home for a long period (on average, 7 years preceding the study) and those having come home more recently (on average, about 2 years before the study). Almost all the

migrant children of the sample were born in West Germany. The control group consisted of all the other children in the same classes who were born and educated in Greece.

Teacher, peer and self-rating instruments were used (Pupil Behavior Rating Scale, PBRS, Lambert & Bower, 1962; Peer Rating Sociometric Instrument, Coie et al., 1982; Self-Description Questionnaire SDQ, Marsh et al., 1983a, 1983b, 1983c, 1985). Once these instruments had been translated and pretested, they were first analyzed to evaluate their psychometric characteristics over the whole sample, and the distributions of single items and combined scores were scrutinized. A factor analysis of each instrument was carried out for the whole sample in order to be able to establish the structure of the instruments used and determine indices and scales to be used for the comparison of the groups. Reliability indices were established using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Data on pupils' achievement in mother tongue, mathematics and history were also gathered. Additionally, the returning school children were asked to complete a questionnaire with questions regarding their length of stay in Germany and Greece, on the type of German schools attended, on their results in the German schools, on attendance or not of a Greek school in Germany and if so, of the results achieved in those establishments.

The *fourth part* of the project was concerned with the programmes especially set up for pupils after their return home. Methods used were similar to the methods used in parts 1 and 2 of the project. Special emphasis was given to interviews with teachers, students, experts and politicians as well as to observations of teaching lessons in a considerable proportion of the different types of the special classes being set up for the return students in the various regions of the country of origin. Also, a close inspection of the materials and of the legal regulations being prepared for these educational programmes was conducted.

3 Results

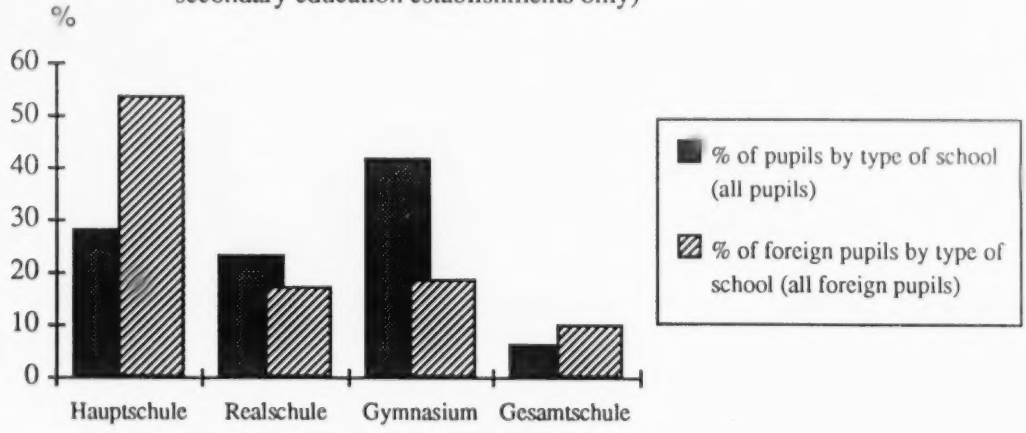
3.1 Origins and characteristics of migrant workers and the school situation of their children in the host country

According to the statistics presented by the Conference of the Ministers of Education and Culture (Kultusministerkonferenz) in 1991, 780.200 foreign children attended general education establishments in West Germany in 1990 (not accounting for vocational schools). Amongst these, 76.5% are coming from the following six labour-supplying countries: Turkey 60.5%, Yugoslavia 17.1%, Italy 11.9%, Greece 6.2%, Spain 2.4%, and Portugal 1.8%.

The proportion of foreign pupils (all nationalities) of the overall school population varies according to school type. While at the primary school the full range of the pupils is represented (87% local students and 13% foreign students), there are marked differences in the various types of secondary schools. Since secondary schools are organised through a selection system in Germany, inequalities between different groups can easily be detected without the use of achievement tests.

In 1989, the breakdown of foreign pupils in the secondary school system was as follows (cf: figure below):

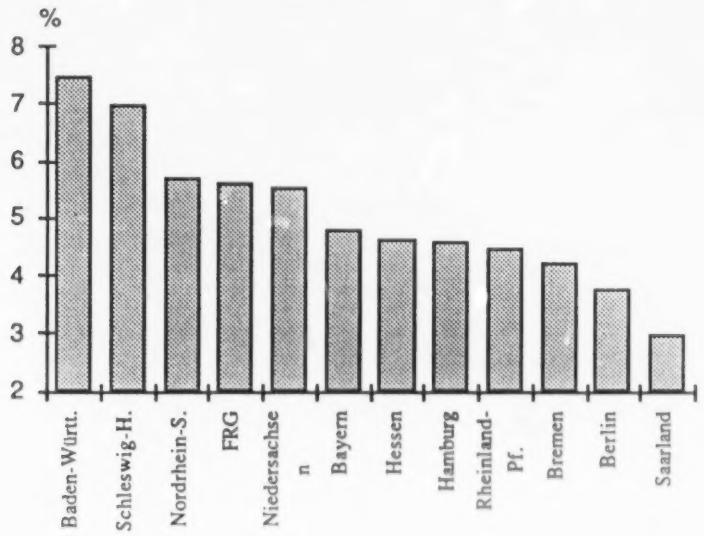
Percentage of overall pupil count and foreign pupil count in secondary schools in pre-unification West Germany, 1989 (school population of secondary education establishments only)



Whilst 28% of all secondary school aged pupils attended the Hauptschule (slow-learners school), 54% of foreign children of secondary school age attended this type of school. As far as middle schools (Realschule) were concerned, these figures were 23% and 17% respectiveley for the overall figure and the foreign pupils group. The "academic" secondary schools (Gymnasium) accomodated 42% of the overall group of secondary school age, whilst only 19% of the foreign pupils of the same age group attended. Finally, the Gesamtschule - the only type of secondary school which does not practice selective entrance - saw 10% of the foreign population of that age group against 7% of the overall group. In other words, about 20% of all pupils attending the Hauptschule were of the foreign group, as were 15% of the Gesamtschule, but only 8% of the Realschule and 5% of the Gymnasium. It should be added to these observations that in the case of slow-learners remedial schools, foreign pupils as compared to the overall population also showed a disproportionately high representation.

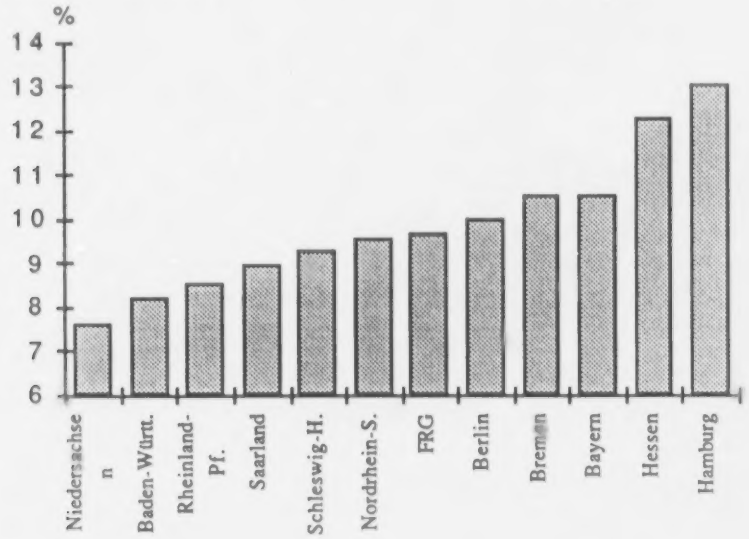
The average figures for the 11 Länder (states) of pre-unification West Germany mask some considerable regional differences. For example, whilst the proportion of foreign attendees of German slow-learner special schools (of all foreign students) over the 11 Länder averaged out at 5,6% of all foreign children in 1989, the extremes ranged between 7,5% in Baden-Württemberg and 6,9% in Schleswig-Hollstein to 3,8% in Berlin and 2,9% in Saarland. The diagram below shows a region by region analysis.

Percentage of foreign children in special schools from all foreign children in West Germany and the 11 Länder respectively before re-unification, 1989:



In the example of the Gymnasium, the proportion of foreign pupils attending this type of establishment in West Germany (as compared to the overall foreign student population) reached 9.7% in 1989, but as the following diagram shows, the extremes ranged from 7.6% in Niedersachsen and 8.2% in Baden-Württemberg, where small proportions were recorded, to those falling well above the average, particularly 13.0% in Hamburg and 12.2% in Hessen.

Percentage of foreign children in Gymnasium schools from all foreign children in West Germany and the 11 Länder respectively before re-unification, 1989:



The main reasons for the unequal distributions are the regionally different composition of the foreign student group according to nationality, the different educational policies of the states (Länder), and the unequal provision of the various school types in big cities or on the country side. The regional differences that exist within the Länder are often even more pronounced than the differences between them.

In order to understand the reasons for the educational inequalities of migrant children in the German schools, at the beginning the study focused on the relationship between the social class origins of the migrant workers, the enrollment of their children at the different types of secondary schools and the results achieved therein. It was hypothesized that migrants had a above average social status before migration in their home country - as opposed to the lower class social status during the migration period where most of them were hired for blue-collar jobs. Therefore it was expected that their children should have the competence of above average learning outcomes at school unless they had to overcome major barriers.

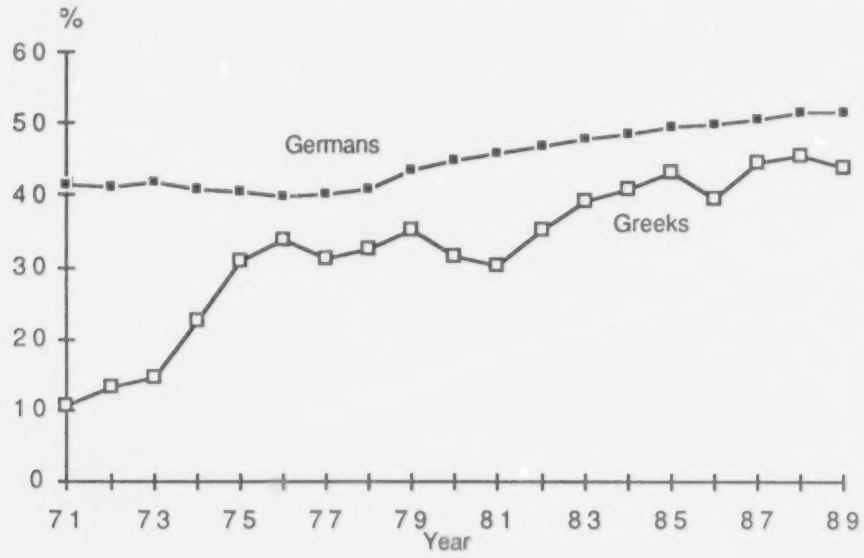
This approach offers some interesting insight into the importance of events and factors that have to be taken into account, when reviewing the generally poor results of migrant children in German schools. This should be taken into account when making forecast for future developments. In fact, the study revealed that migrant workers in West Germany are at a distinct advantage when compared to the group remaining in their native country, as far as social class factors relevant for educational success are concerned. Moreover, foreign workers tend to have particularly high educational expectations for their children.

It is fair to say that these expectations were not fulfilled by the "second generation" migrants over the first years of their time in West Germany. As the above graphs indicate, when compared to their German counterpart, children of migrant workers receiving education in West Germany are at a disadvantage in terms of success at school given the type of school attended.

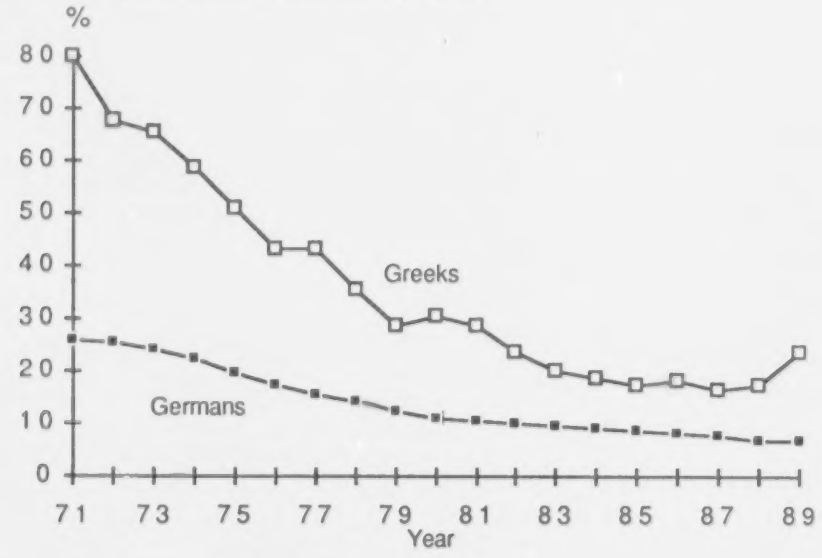
Nevertheless, over recent years (around 15 to 20 years after the beginning of this migratory trend), the number of children being enrolled in middle or higher range secondary schools is clearly on the increase (i.e.: Realschule and Gymnasium category). This is more an indication of the parents´ social standing in the native country than in the host country.

In favorable circumstances, however, the proportion of foreign children attending secondary schools does come close to that observed for German children. This holds true both for the positive selection type school, the Gymnasium, and the negative selection type, the Hauptschule, as shown in the graphs below:

Proportion of German and Greek pupils attending Gymnasium schools in West Berlin from 1971 to 1989 (as a percentage of the age group):



Proportion of German and Greek pupils attending Hauptschule schools in West Berlin from 1971 to 1989 (as a percentage of the age group):



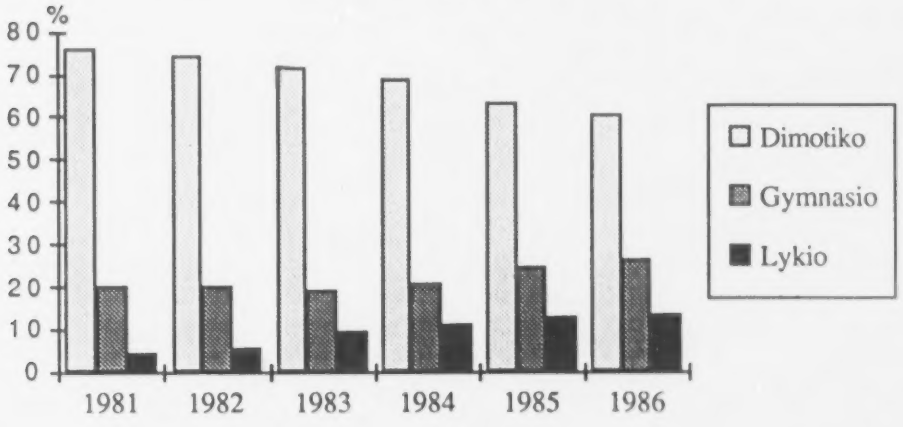
These results are expected when school success is predicted from the social status indicators relevant for predicting educational achievement - if these inicators are taken from the situation of the migrants in the country of origin, not in the host country. The trends document a better

correspondence between competence and performance at school of the children in question. The results point out that there are still considerable barriers in the German school system operating against the development of the migrant children in the schools according to their abilities and interests.

3.2 Mother-tongue teaching, nationality-based classes and schools in the host country

In the second part of the project, mother-tongue tuition, nationality-based classes or other similar types of schooling available in West Germany were studied. Statistics show that about two thirds of the school polulation of Greek nationality attend this type of education; one third visit a regular compulsory German school only. The students attending Greek schooling of any type are unequally distributed over the different stages of the educational system. The majority of the students in these institutions attends Greek elementary schools (Dimotiko) or mother-tongue teaching arrangements within the German school setting at elementary school level; the second largest group visits the lower secondary school (Gymnasio, grades 7-9, and/or corresponding German schools), and the smallest group the upper secondary school (Lykio, grades 10-12, and/or corresponding German schools).

Greek students attending national classes of national schools or mother-tongue teaching in the FRG



But, as the graph shows, the number of parents sending the children to nationality-based teaching at the elementary school level is decreasing while the numbers and proportions increase at the secondary school level. This trend has become still stronger in recent years. There seems to be a tendency of adaptation to the life in the country of migration of the families with younger children; at the same time the orientation towards the country of origin is getting stronger in the older group. This probably reflects the interests not of the family, but of the students themselves. Similar tendencies (looking back to the roots) have been observed in third generation migrants in other target countries of migration too.

Some 1,300 Greek teachers work in Germany, including about 700 in primary education and 600 in secondary. Most of them are financed by the Greek government, a fact showing its high interest in helping the migrants to keep the standards of national schooling even abroad.

Although this educational sector is divided up between institutions having varied types of structures, and enormous differences exist between the regions of Germany, the results achieved by these different educational structures are, as identified by the conclusions of the study, rather similar. By way of example, whatever the educational system chosen in West Germany - including national-based schools which offer the complete

pedagogical curriculum of the native country - , all the pupils consistently produce lower levels of command of their native tongue after several years in the foreign country when compared to their fellow pupils following their studies in the native land. Only in spelling are the children attending nationality-based schools more effective than those in the host country having followed only about 5 hours of tuition per week in their native language (above and beyond the normal German curriculum) (Kiliari, 1986).

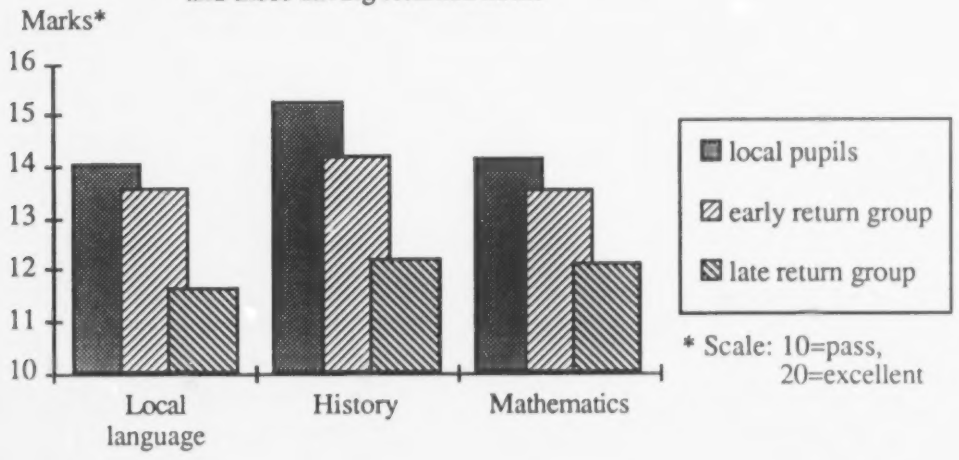
3.3 Educational situation after the return to the country of origin

The third part of the study involved the situation faced by migrants' children at school after returning to their native country. Although there remain some analyses to be completed on the data gathered, results show that those children returning home face severe difficulties of adaptation in the schools. Their educational performance is clearly below the national standard, and the year of return to Greece was found to be negatively correlated at a statistical significant level with the teacher evaluation of the students' performance and their achievement in language, history and math for secondary school remigrant students[1].

The following graphs lay out some of the results of this part of the study and underline the problem:

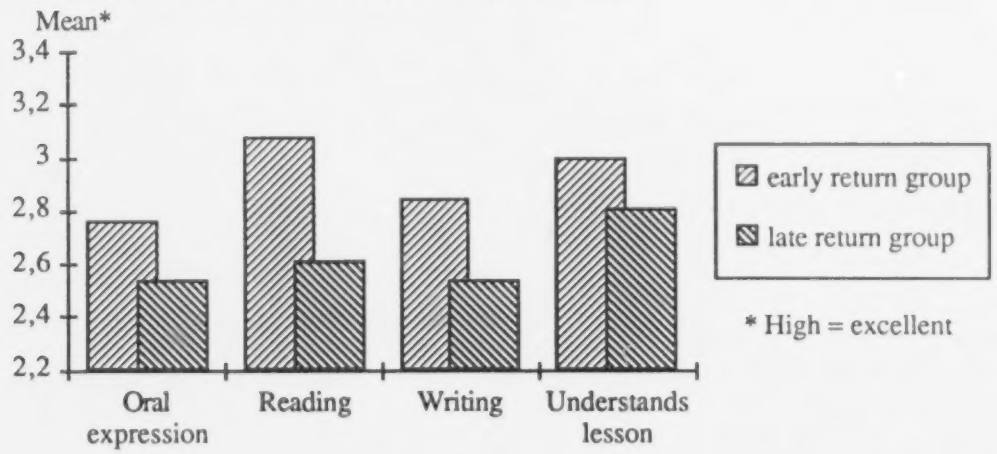
[1] The presentation in this short paper will concentrate on the students of secondary schools only. For further information see list of selected publications from the project.

Marks given in 3 disciplines in secondary school to local pupils and those having returned home

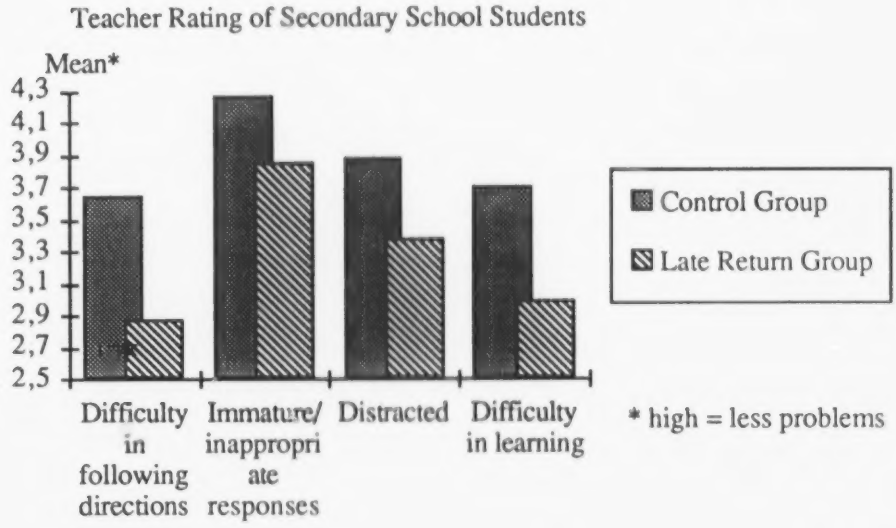


Achievement is a function of the time the pupil returns, as the graph below shows in terms of performance in language-based subjects:

Linguistic capabilities of the child as evaluated by the teacher (1=poor, 5=excellent) (secondary schooling)



In the eyes of the teachers, the children returning more recently also have problems adapting to the classroom environment[1]:



On the other hand, problems of social re-integration were not as serious as could be expected[2].

In sum, based on the teachers' perspective, remigrant students' behavioral patterns in seconday school do not show differences between early return

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[1] A significant group effect for the classroom adaptation factor of the *teacher rating instrument* ($F = 3.102$, $p < .04$) in secondary school was found. Planned contrasts between the groups further showed that late return students ($t = -2.34$, $p < .019$) and all return students combined ($t = -2.27$, $p < .024$) have significantly more classroom adaptation difficulties than control students as seen by the teachers. Items from this factor are shown in the graph.

[2] Concerning the *peer rating* instrument, analysis of variance showed a significant group effect only for the non-accepted behavior factor (3) ($F=2.95$, $p<.05$) in secondary school. Planned contrasts between the groups showed that control students were more frequently nominated as exhibiting non-accepted behavior as compared to late return students ($t=1.89$, $p<.05$) and to all return students combined ($t=-2.42$, $p<.016$).
As far as the *self rating* instrument is concerned, regarding secondary school students, analyses of variance revealed significant group effects for the verbal competence/general school achievement factor (1) [$F = 7.83$, $p < .00$] and the positive physical appearance/positive self-concept factor (3) ($F = 2.97$, $p < .05$). As expected, late return students perceived themselves as having significantly more difficulties (Newman-Keuls tests, $p < .05$) in verbal competence and general school achievement than control and early return students respectively. On the other hand they show a better physical appearance/self-concept as compared to local students.

and local students, but the late return students are perceived by their teachers as having significantly more classroom adaptation and learning difficulties than local students. Their difficulties are related to the year of return to Greece: the later the students return, the more difficulties they experience in the schools of their home country. Achievement in basic school subjects are clearly below standard.

Remigrant students are perceived by their peers as exhibiting less frequently non-accepted behavioral patterns than their classmates. They avoide to exhibit negative behavioral patterns (characteristic for each age group) to the same extent as local students do; the avoidance of any type of negative visibility in the classroom may reflect the remigrant students' effort for a smooth adjustment in the school.

Late return secondary school students perceive themselves as being more physically attractive connected with a more positive self-concept than their local classmates. This finding, whether it reflects reality or not, can possibly be regarded as the children's own defence mechanism, a way of coping with their language and learning difficulties in a school system where verbal competence is strongly related to academic success. They further report significantly more difficulties in verbal competence and general school achievement than control and early return students respectively, which is in good agreement with the assessment given by the teachers.

Contrary to our hypotheses, the remigrant students do not exhibit any severe interpersonal problems, a fact that indicates a rather smooth social adjustment process, nor do they show remarkable intrapersonal problems as compared to their local classmates.

It is our prediction though that the majority of secondary late return students will not overcome their difficulties in school achievement completely until they finish highschool and, consequently, will have little chance for passing the highly selective entrance examination to the Greek universities. Our results underscore the importance of the right time for remigration.

3.4 Special educational treatments for return migrants' children in the country of origin

As far as special types of education provided by the education authorities for children returning home were concerned, these followed various different models, e.g. separate classes for return students within regular schools; separate schools for returnees only; supplementary teaching lessons for return students in the normal educational establishments. The concepts and application of these models have been described and evaluated (Hopf, 1992).

Overall, it should be noted that only about one percent of children needing a particular type of assistance in this area were given it. This in spite of the fact that a programme existed which did not separate the return students from the local students and was in the possession of materials especially developed for the return students. The vast majority of children returning home did not have the opportunity to benefit from special educational programmes which would have helped them to overcome their problems at school.

4 Conclusions

By way of conclusion, it has been found that the labour migration to Germany in the sixties and seventies has been a positive selective migration process. Nevertheless, migrant children have had, and still do have, serious problems at school during the migratory period. Moreover, they are also at a disadvantage after returning home to the country of origin. Unless they return to their country when they are nine years old at the latest, they have little chance of succeeding at school. For this reason, the majority of the children of migrant workers can be considered the real victims of migration, whether it be in the host country or back in the home country. This is true at least in the case of schooling. This situation could be improved by setting up effective orientation and special intervention programmes for children in the host country as well as for those having returned home.

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